

Pre and Post-Operative Instructions:  
**Distal Biceps Tendon Repair**

For instructional videos, please visit [sportsrehab.ucsf.edu](https://sportsrehab.ucsf.edu)

**Prior to surgery:**

**Medications:** Please fill your medication prescriptions prior to your surgery. Both narcotic and non-narcotic medications will be e-prescribed to your pharmacy. Check your After Visit Summary (AVS) for the location of your e-prescribed prescriptions.

**Physical Therapy:** Contact a physical therapist as soon as possible to get an appointment scheduled. **You want to begin physical therapy approximately 7-10 days following your surgery.** You will receive a physical therapy prescription at your pre-operative visit or at your first post-operative visit.

**Daily activities:** If you are having surgery on your dominant extremity, it is good to practice performing daily activities including personal hygiene and dressing yourself with your non-surgical limb.

**Clothing:** We recommend loose fitting or button-up tops. While keeping your arm at your side, slide the top up your surgical arm first, then get your non-surgical arm in second. Perform the opposite when getting undressed by removing your non-surgical arm first, and then sliding the top down your surgical arm.

**Anti-bacterial body wash:** Please use an anti-bacterial soap in place of your normal body wash during your last shower- either the night before or the morning of your surgery. We recommend Hibiclens or anti-bacterial Dial soap. Wash your **ENTIRE** body with the soap and rinse off. Do not use on your face, hair, or genital area as it may cause dry skin.

**Food/Water:** Do not eat any food or drink any fluids, including water, after 12am the night prior to your surgery. Patients who do not follow this may experience a delayed or even cancelled surgery.

**MyChart:** If you have not already signed up for UCSF MyChart, please refer to the back of your After Visit Summary (AVS) to register. This is an online portal that will enable you to access some of your medical records, request prescription refills, check appointment times and most importantly it allows you to send and receive messages from your treating physician or surgeon.

**On day of surgery:**

**Ice:** Use a bag of ice, ice pack, frozen peas or cold therapy unit. Place over bandaged elbow for 20 minutes every 1-2 hours to decrease pain and inflammation. If you do not feel like the ice is penetrating the surgical dressing, discontinue until after your post-operative appointment when the bandages are removed.

**Pain Medication:** When you are discharged from the surgery center, return home, eat a light meal and begin taking the pain medication as prescribed. Do not wait until you experience pain to start taking the medications as it takes 30-45 minutes to work. The first 2-3 days are usually the most painful, so continue with the medications as prescribed, but as pain decreases you can decrease the narcotic medication as tolerated. Avoid taking Tylenol while you are taking the narcotic medication as they both contain acetaminophen, which can be dangerous in high amounts.



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**Eating:** Eat bland or liquid foods following surgery. The narcotic medication and/or the anesthesia medications may cause nausea or vomiting. Progress to your normal diet slowly over the 24 hours following surgery. Take narcotic and anti-inflammatory medications with food whenever possible.

**Post-op Day 1 and until 1<sup>st</sup> Post-op visit:**

**Surgical Dressing:** Keep the dressing on the surgical site until your first post-operative visit – usually about 5-9 days after your surgery. Do not remove the dressing or put ointment on your incision as this may increase the risk of post-operative infection.

**Bathing:** You may sponge bath following surgery. You can also carefully shower using a handheld shower head, but be very careful that you DO NOT get your surgical dressing/splint wet as this may increase the risk of post-operative infection. Do not use a hot tub, swim in a pool or the ocean until instructed by your surgeon.

**Sling/Brace:** You may discontinue the sling as comfort permits, usually 2-3 days after surgery. The brace or post-op splint should remain on at all times until discontinued by your surgeon. DO NOT change the settings on the brace.

**Restrictions:** It is OK to write/type with your hand. Do not hold anything that weighs more than your cell phone.

**Sleeping:** Elevate the upper body on pillows when lying down for the first 48 hours. A recliner works well for sleeping comfortably. The brace or post-op splint should remain on while sleeping.

**Driving:** You are not allowed to drive until cleared by your surgeon and have discontinued using the narcotic pain medications.

**Post-Operative Exercises:** Begin the post-operative exercises the day after surgery. Perform them 5 times per day and continue until you start physical therapy. Visit [sportsrehab.ucsf.edu](http://sportsrehab.ucsf.edu) to review videos of these exercises.

**Please call the office if you have any of the following:**

Fever greater than 101.5°F or 38.5°C  
Continuing drainage from the wound/dressing  
Unrelenting pain  
Excessive nausea/vomiting due to pain medication  
Any other worrisome conditions

If you have questions, feel free to call (415) 353-2808 or your Surgeon's Practice Assistant Mon- Fri 8:30-4:30pm.

*For assistance after business hours or on weekends call the office at (415) 353-7566 and the answering service will assist you.*

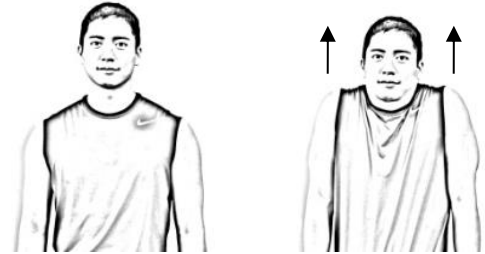
**Please arrive 30 minutes early for your 1<sup>st</sup> post-operative appointment for x-rays**



**Post-Operative Exercises: Start the day after surgery.**

Perform these exercises 5 times per day.

1. **Shoulder Shrugs.** Keeping the brace or post-op splint on, shrug your shoulders up as far as they can go, and hold for 10 seconds. Lower shoulders down and repeat 10 times.



2. **Ball Squeezes.** Holding a tennis ball, rubber ball or silly putty, squeeze 20-30 times to help with circulation and swelling.



3. **Begin range of motion exercises of the wrist and hand immediately, as comfort permits.** Straighten and bend the wrist and straighten and bend the fingers. Do these exercises several times a day so that your wrist and hand does not get stiff.

